**Lesson 9**

In order to ensure the needs of special needs students are met you must first ensure parents and staff know about the educational interventions and services that will be provided to the student. It is vital to conduct a meeting with all stakeholders about what the student should learn, the methods that will be used, and the amount of time provided to meet those needs so that all stakeholders will be well informed and have ownership of the decisions about the services to be provided for the student and with the understanding that variables such as where, and by whom these services will be provided may change but that their input is valued as part of the decision making process.

In the case study an IEP review, either at the time he was transferred or within the first weeks of his enrollment, needed to be conducted. The law does not prohibit checking progress towards behavior/educational goals and modifying an IEP. The review would most likely have provided the parents with clear goals that Rickie needed to meet as part of his contract and the support that the school would provide before getting to the point of referring him to another facility. An IEP meeting with all stakeholders should have been conducted to set new goals based on observed behavior that could have prevented the incident. The immediate changes that could be made with parent and staff input would be the following: 1) the aide provided to Rickie would be a male, due to his previous outburst toward females. 2) Rickie would be provided with therapy sessions for his anger management toward females and provided tools to cope with his anger. 3) Adjust and explain goals to parents regarding compliance with public law 94-142 to provide transition from school to work, meaning he would have a modified schedule and would not have all general education classes.

In order to prepare general education teachers for inclusion it is imperative to provide professional development around engaging instruction and effective classroom management that scaffolds and if necessary, modifies lessons to support special needs students. Assuring that teachers utilize effective classroom management, lesson planning and instructional techniques will help address students’ behaviors and prevent escalating behavior situations. It is imperative to have the staff invest their time in sound instructional practices that are engaging to all students and are coupled with successful classroom management to prevent and reduce aggressive behaviors. If teachers and support staff are able to manage the classroom behavior of a student by knowing how to prevent triggers and outbursts, or know how to deescalate the situation then a small discipline problem will not escalate to the level that Rickie displayed in the case study, to the point of hitting the aide and dislocating her shoulder.

In preparing the staff with PD that focuses on inclusion via engaging instruction, through lesson planning and good classroom management, you are documenting the training teachers are getting to work with special needs students. Since the IEP was revised, this is your legal document that would address the short term and long term goals for Rickie to achieve behaviorally and academically. If you are complying with the procedures of doing monthly progress checks for Rickie’s IEP, then no further documentation would be needed since you are reviewing and adjusting Rickie’s short term goals and adjusting the services he needs to be successful in the classroom. During the reviews, the student’s behavior should include the occurrences of his behavior by providing office referrals and teacher documentation as data points to provide input into the frequency of misbehavior and assure that the proper support is given to the student. A plan to communicate this to parents should also be in place. Furthermore, anytime a behavior related incident happens the case worker needs to be contacted, along with the parent a record the call or meeting.

By ensuring that the parents and the staff that will work with the student participate in the creation of IEP plans, communicate clearly why there is a need for the student to have the modifications and everyone agrees to what will be best for the child, you are proactively preventing law suits. Major points to keep parents and staff from suing are: communication, documentation, ensuring that all parties are included in the process and all have proper training and support to deal with the accommodations. If all this is in place and is documented in the IEP then you will prevent many lawsuits, but not forgetting that this does not guarantee staff members or parents from suing.